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MacDonald, James Ramsay

Labour party's policy

Manchester

[1912?]

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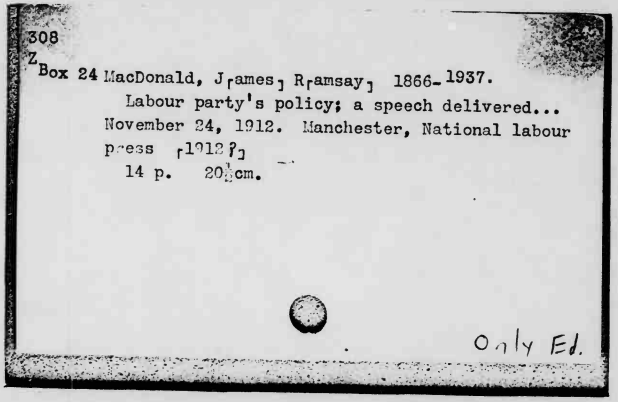

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Z Box 24 MacDonald, J[ames] R[amsay] 1866-1937.
Labour party's policy; a speech delivered...
November 24, 1912. Manchester, National labour
press [1912?]
14 p. 20½cm.

Only Ed.

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TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm REDUCTION RATIO: 11:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 2-3-97 INITIALS: PB.

TRACKING # : 20409

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Labour Party's Policy

Dr. J. Ramsay MacDonald

Labour Party's Policy.

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A Speech Delivered by Mr. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD, M.P., at the Theatre Royal, Halifax, Sunday, November 24, 1912.

NATIONAL BRANCH, I.L.P.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Published for the I.L.P. Publication Department by The National Labour Press, Limited, 30, Blackfriars Street, Manchester; St. Bride's House, Salisbury Square, Fleet Street, London, E.C.; and 100, John Bright Street, Birmingham.

Nov. 12 1912 G33

Labour Party's Policy.

A Speech Delivered by Mr. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD, M.P., at the Theatre Royal, Halifax, Sunday, November 24, 1912.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD, who was received with loud and prolonged applause, said:

My friends, I have come here to-night in circumstances which, if Halifax were not Halifax, and Parker were not Parker, would have made me stay away. But the Labour Party, and more particularly those of us who hold official positions in the Party, owe so much to Parker that I felt that if it was at all possible I was bound to come and speak from his platform here to-night. (Applause.) Parker is one of those men whom you will never find in fancy dress heading a demonstration. That is not the kind of man that he is. But if you go down to the places where the workers are doing the real labour of the world, there you will find him with his coat off and his hands hard with work. (Applause.) That is the man I like. He is not one of those who elevates his self-will into what is called conscientious objection and who changes his mind every week, or every month, and blames his colleagues for not possessing the same miraculous process of change. (Laughter and applause.) In the House of Commons and in the Labour Party you want men who can say after careful study of their minds and the events of society: "I know in what I believe, and irrespective of influence outside I shall go straight and steadily for the goal." My friends, it is not always picturesque. (A voice: "Why don't you keep your Albert Hall pledge?") I propose to deal with the subject of women's franchise before I sit down, but no attempt at browbeating or interruption will have the least influence upon me. (Loud applause.) It is not always picturesque. I tell you, my Labour and, above all, my Socialist friends, who want to use the House of Commons for grave social and constructive purposes, that the men whose life's work is going to contribute something substantial to the City of God which is to be built in this country are the men who are always going to be at it in fair and foul weather,

and whose faith is not going to be shaken by every wind that blows or by every change of doctrine. That is the sort of man that Parker is, and that is why I support him.

THE HONOUR OF PARLIAMENT.

The Chairman has said that, of late, the House of Commons has been subjected to attacks which are so disgraceful and contemptible that everybody who believes in democracy should resent these attacks in every way. They say that we are corrupt. (A woman: "You are.") They say that we are there for £400 a year. (A woman: "We don't mind that.) No, you don't mind that, but if that is the sort of intelligence you can bring upon public questions then the longer—— (Applause; which drowned the conclusion of the speaker's sentence.) We reply to our accusers, "We are as honest as you are. (Applause.) We come from people as honest as the people that you come from —(Applause)—and we hold to our convictions, and we adopt our policy, at any rate with an intelligence which some of you would be very well advised if you attempted to adopt." (Loud and prolonged applause.) Who is it that raises these points? When I hear of Tory lordlings rise up from the benches of the Opposition and talk of our running after £400 a year I have my answer. Unfortunately for them I know something about history, and unfortunately for them I have read a little of their history. The history of that class is one long unending and unbroken tale of robbery of the people through the House of Commons when the House of Commons was a mere echo of their thoughts and wishes. Once upon a time, for instance, they were moved by the religious principles of the Protestant Reformation, but, so far as they were concerned, their great interest was to fill their pockets with the riches and the property of the monasteries. These people talked of developing the country economically; but what did they mean? Only that they wanted to steal common lands. All through, from the beginning to the end of the chapter, you have got them, their wives and their daughters, their sons, their uncles and their aunts, all getting rewards and gratuities out of the public purse; and why? because they had a majority in the House of Commons. (Applause.) You find them creating jobs at every turn, jobs of the most disgraceful character, and these jobs they appropriated for their own families. (Applause.) I find them continually devising how they can reward themselves. By sheer barefaced robbery of the public, the common people, they are now where they are; but now, you have Democracy fighting for itself. (Loud applause.) Those people who fling these insults at us are now beginning to boast of their honesty and their self-righteousness. I misjudge the people of this country very much if they are not witnessing what

is going on now and making up their minds to show their horror, their detestation, and their hatred of this conduct when the opportunity arrives. There is no class in the community which knows better than the Tory Party, and the plutocrats of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons, the value of public representation. They know that if you get the House of Commons kept in honour and reverence by the people, then Democracy has a weapon that is invincible. The reactionaries know perfectly well that if they could destroy the House of Commons, if they could besmirch our public life, and if they could bring the great mass of the people to come to the view that Parker and myself and your public representatives are, irrespective of Party, corrupt and self-seeking men, and low spirited too, then they know that the great weapon of Democracy—its sword Excalibur—which has won its battles in the past, has been wrenched from the hands of Democracy, and like Samson, Democracy, bound hand and foot, would be in the hands of the Philistines. (Loud applause.)

Well, my friends, we are not going to do it. Representative institutions, the House of Commons in particular, so far as the Labour Party is concerned, is going to be kept at a high level of honesty, at a high level of endeavour, and at a high level of purity, so that when it acts for you it acts with responsibility and with respect. As a matter of fact, all these accusations of corruption are far more of the nature of self-revelation than anything else. When I meet, say, a lady who says to me, knowing nothing at all about me, not knowing my motives, having no knowledge of my purposes, when I meet her and the first thing she says to me is "You are corrupt," what conclusion do I come to? Not that I *am* corrupt, but that she is. (Hear, hear.) The conclusion is so overwhelmingly obvious that nobody can escape it. The man or woman who is always finding bad motives for every action is prompted himself or herself by exactly that class of motive. (Hear, hear.) That is exactly the position of so many of the critics of our movement at the present moment. (Hear, hear.) These criticisms are far more of the nature of self-revelation than of descriptions of what is happening. Mr. Bonar Law's accusations are nothing but Mr. Bonar Law telling us what he is.

KEEPING THE GOVERNMENT IN.

We are blamed for keeping the Government in office. We are blamed for voting with the Government irrespective of the merits of the case. I can quite well understand how the Opposition is angry about that. It is a great grievance of the Opposition, and if I were the leader of the Opposition I would be angry about it, too. I understand their feelings perfectly well. They have laid their snares very carefully, but we have not gone into them.

They have tried snap divisions upon us, but they have never got us as they got the Government. (Laughter.) They have dug their pits, but they themselves have fallen into them, and every time they have done it, like Brer Fox, we, in the adjoining patch, have been wiggling our ears and laughing at them all the time. (Applause.) They are bound to be angry and abusive. That is the way that God made Mr. Bonar Law, and he can't help it. (Laughter.)

I want to tell you, without reserve, that when the Labour Party went into the House of Commons in 1906 it adopted a policy of voting upon everything on its wide merits. (A voice: "Not women in the Home Rule Bill.") Don't talk nonsense, my dear lady. You bleed my heart far more than you upset my intelligence. (Loud laughter.) We are voting for everything on the large merits of the case. If you are offered a potion to-night you have not got to see only whether it is sweet or bitter to the taste, you have to think what effect it will have to-morrow morning. Someone may say, "I am very much opposed to woman suffrage, but I am going to vote for it." You ask "Why?" "Oh," he says, "because it will turn the Government out." You ask, "When you come into power will you give women the vote?" He says, "No, certainly not." Now what are the merits of that case? People who do that sort of thing are dishonest politicians. (Hear, hear.) People who aid and abet them are fools. So far as I am concerned, we are not going to place ourselves in the hands of those people to be mere pawns in the game they are playing. (Applause.) What is the position to-day? It is a very trying position. During the past years there has been much accumulation of business. That business has to be got through, but owing to the development of the methods of obstruction, of talk—of needless, pointless, useless talk—it is very difficult to get it through in a proper sort of way.

HOME RULE.

First of all there is the Home Rule Bill. Now I hold that Home Rule is one of those questions which have a direct economic bearing on the lives of the working classes. You are not to go on developing your powers of self-government in this country unless and until Ireland gets Home Rule. Moreover, the division of opinion now in Ireland, which is so disastrous to working-class interests, cannot be removed until Ireland receives the right of self-government. (Hear, hear.) It is just like this: you come upon a road that leads to an end that you want to get to. There is a block upon it; you are bound to stop and remove the block, you cannot get over it, you cannot smash it. You have to stop the vehicle in which you are, put your shoulder to the obstacle, clear it out of the way, and then you can go double speed ahead.

DISESTABLISHMENT.

Then there is the question of Disestablishment. I am afraid that under the present circumstances Disestablishment is not what you would call an exceedingly popular subject. But I am not quite sure whether that is a good sign or a bad sign. My feelings incline towards deeming it to be a bad sign. When you get great masses of people not interested in spiritual liberty and religious liberty, then you have a people who are so grossly materialistically-minded that they will not respond to great ideals at all. You will then not have minds roaming through the world of the understanding and the spirit worshipping freely. (Applause.) If you have a population indifferent to the binding of religion with a State connection, then you have much to regret. That is my personal and private view, and I will give effect to it, as I pledged myself to my constituents.

THE FRANCHISE.

Then we come to franchise. A franchise without woman would be unjust. (Loud applause.) It would be so unfair that no reasonable being could contemplate it. How are women to be included? The Labour Party since it went into the House of Commons has taken up a very definite attitude on matters like this. Whenever any big question comes before the House we are interviewed by the man who says "I would like to vote for it but my Whips say 'Vote the other way,' and as a loyal party man I have got to vote the way the Whips tell me." Year after year we have appealed to the Government to introduce a Bill reversing the Osborne judgment, and then to leave the details to the unfettered judgment of the House of Commons. We have said: "Introduce it as a Government measure, but do not put the Whips on in Committee. Don't send out Whips instructing your men to go into the lobby for a full reversal or a partial one. Give Parliament liberty to vote as it likes." That is our position on the franchise, and we are going to stick to that position. (Applause.) On the Franchise Bill we say that the one chance that the women have is that the Government shall introduce the Bill as it is and then leave the women's amendments to the free and unfettered decision of the House of Commons. I am going to do nothing against that. (A woman: "We don't believe that.") I do. We will do nothing to go back upon our record or upon our principles. We will fight for women's franchise, and we will do it in the way which we believe will be the most effective in the end for securing votes for women. (Applause.)

THE OSBORNE BILL.

Then there is a fourth matter. I have referred to the Osborne Judgment and its reversal. That is a matter that I

hope my Labour and Socialist and Trade Union friends are watching day by day and week by week. (Applause.) I regret very much that the speeches delivered in the Committee upon which I have been sitting dealing with this Bill are not officially reported. You would then know, you Trades Unionists, what the Opposition thinks about you. (Hear, hear.) When there is a strike on they simply load the Question Paper of the House with the most malignant calumnies against you. Charges that are unsupported by facts, every miserable piece of tittle-tattle that gets into the newspapers, lead to innumerable aspersions being made against not any one union but against the whole system of Trades Unionism and Trades Union government. Now note that these amendments which are moved upstairs in the House of Commons do not affect the Osborne Judgment. They are moved in order to alter fundamentally Trade Union law. They would upset the Taff Vale decision and the Act of 1876, which is the great foundation of the whole of the social and political fabric of Trade Unionism, in order to give every discontented member of a union the power to take his union into Court, so that lawyers can get big fees and employers' agents bankrupt the funds of the great fighting forces of Labour in this country. Lord Wolmer, Lord Winterton, Mr. Peto, and others of their colleagues hold to the assumption that Trades Unionism is tyranny, contrary to the individual liberty of the Unionist, and opposed to the well-being of the State. The other day they actually moved that if a Trade Union is going to take advantage of this Bill which we are now discussing, two-thirds of its members ought to vote upon it. It was a most innocent-looking thing. It was one of those kind of things which Satan creates. It looks very fair upon the face of it, but it is exceedingly wicked at heart. Nobody seemed to see the point until I pointed out what the meaning of that apparently simple-minded amendment was. Let us assume that there is a union with 12,000 members and a ballot is taking place in that union to find if that union will take any political line of action. Two-thirds of the members must vote; that means 8,000 must vote. Supposing 6,000 vote in favour of political action and 1,000 vote against it. Nothing can happen. The union cannot engage in political action. Yet you have actually got half of the union in favour of political action—in fact, you can have more than half, because you can have 6,500 in favour—but because the sum total of the two sides is not 8,000 nothing can be done. Very well; but that is not all. Those members who are under the thumb of, say, the noble lordlings whom we have to meet on Committee upstairs would be instructed not to vote against political action, because that vote would be counted for the purpose of obtaining two-thirds, but not to vote at all, because then the two-thirds that are required to make the vote

effective would have to be composed altogether of those in favour. You would therefore have to get 8,000 votes cast in favour of political action before the resolution can come into operation. Now, you know what the intentions of these gentlemen are. That amendment was moved officially by the Tories on the Committee, supported officially by the Tories, and they voted upon it because they wanted to protect the rights of the minority man against the tyranny of the 8,000 majority in a union of 12,000.

OUR RELATIONS TO OTHER PARTIES.

What is our duty in these circumstances? Do not talk nice glib talk in your workshops: "Oh, these Labour men are not voting against the Government," and so on. That is not carrying you one-sixteenth part of an inch on the rough and thorny road in which you and I have to go if we are to fight our battles successfully against men whose financial interests are touched, who are using all their brains, all their intelligence, all the force, intellectual and moral, at their command to smash you up and to make this Bill not an aid to you but a millstone hanging about the neck of Trade Unionism. Our relationship to governments and other parties is determined first of all by what a Government is doing. It may not be doing very much. But the theory is this. The Liberals are the same as Tories. Then why turn the Liberals out? It is waste effort. (Hear, hear.) If the Tories were in and the Liberals were out, and if the Tories had produced this Trade Union Bill and the Liberals were moving amendments such as the Tories are now moving to it, I would not vote against the Tory Government; I would vote in such a way that the Opposition had no chance of being responsible for the making of laws until I had this Bill safely landed in my own pocket. I will not reconsider my position for one moment before that takes place in this present Parliament. We have to consider, as I say, in determining our relations to the parties, whether it is the Liberal Government or a Tory Government, first of all what it is doing. Then we have to consider what it is not doing. Its negative position may be as valuable as its positive position. A Government may refrain from doing harm; it may not be taking action which would be hampering to future progress. That is what I mean by negative action that is valuable. This is an aspect of the third thing we have to take account of. For we have to consider what the other side would do if it was in office. I have indicated what that would be. You know what would happen about Trade Union law, about Tariff Reform, about Land Reform, and about other things. Our action has been taken after surveying all these circumstances, and I maintain that that is the only way of settling what policy we ought to pursue. (Hear, hear.)

THE FUTURE.

The question arises as to the future policy and work of the Party. What are we going to do in the immediate future? Suppose we begin with the Act which has been the subject of considerable criticism, the Insurance Act. The Insurance Act was started for the purpose of preventing or trying to prevent certain evil effects that arose from working-class sickness. That was the intention. I am not going to fight old battles over again. We did not think it was done in the best way. We thought that an attack might have been made by somewhat differently marshalled battalions. But there it is. The Insurance Act has been written upon the Statute Book and it is simply waste of time for people to keep saying, "If I had the chance two or three years ago I would have done differently." That is folly. The Act is there. What are we going to do with it? I said on the Third Reading of the Bill: " You are introducing an Act for the purpose of dealing with sickness. As a matter of fact you are introducing an Act which is going to throw up the problems of poverty and unemployment." The Insurance Act introduced to deal with the sick man is to be the means by which we are to be compelled to deal with sweated men and women.

DEVELOPING THE INSURANCE ACT.

The sweated workman is unable to pay his premium, which from our point of view is so low that when we put the amount in the palm of our hands we cannot understand the position that a man or a woman is in who cannot hand the amount over in order to get security against the evils of sickness and unemployment. When he is unable to hand this money over he cannot remain in benefit. Every now and again there is a change in fashion or in habit; there is overproduction in some direction which throws workers out of employment. The machine of production goes too fast and compensation must be found by making it go too slow afterwards. When it goes too fast the workers work overtime and are made sick. And when it goes too slow they do not get enough work to support them, and if they then get sick they are out of benefit. This is not the fault of the Act; it is the fault of the capitalist system. We can talk for twenty years about the matter; we can have exhibitions and special conferences, wars against poverty, and columns in the newspapers, and now you have one good paper like the "Citizen"—(Loud and prolonged applause)—but still, what happens? For a week everybody is interested; next week the interest begins to fall off. The people are absorbed in a football match, or a horse-race, or an excursion to London with fares paid to break windows—(Loud laughter and applause)—and, within six months after that great interest in poverty has been taken, Parker and I can go and lecture and

agitate about it, and it is just like thrashing dead horses. But what is now to happen? Every time the Government shows a report of the working of the Act you get a list of so many people who cannot pay, and you see that so many people who were members of approved societies have had to drop out because they cannot afford the premiums. You cannot go on that way. Cannot you see the enormous advantage of this? You are taken by the scruff of the neck, so to speak, and compelled to face the problem of poverty, in a definite specific way as you have never had to do before. When this happens you have a new and never failing leverage for the abolition of poverty. How shall we remedy it? You can take your children, feed them, clothe them, and house them at the public expense, but that does not help you. That is simply patching up the old tin kettle; it does not help you to recreate society so that these poor things will disappear altogether. Besides the poor little thing who does not come into the street, and whom you do not see, continues in its starvation, nakedness, and deprivation. We must do better than that. What do we want? Increased incomes from labour—not doles in aid of low wages. We want wages boards applied to every industry which is shown, as a result of the Insurance Act, to be a sweated industry. (Applause.) It is now proved that working men and working women have been working year after year for wages which do not permit them to pay the insurance premium. The wages boards will immediately lift up the wages and then you will supply that reservoir of possession and economic power which is the source of working class liberty.

You must then apply the Labour Party's Right to Work Bill. This Act has given our Bill a new significance. Some dockers are actually paying their own 7d. on Monday morning in order not to be prejudiced for casual employment at the dock gates. That is a scandal and must be got over. Organisation is wanted here and the Insurance Act will force it upon us. But let us note what it means. Take Liverpool. No individual employer pays his threepence. It is all so carefully organised that the man going to work gets a Board of Trade ticket, and he shows it. The threepence per head is grouped and charged to the employers. But what of the surplus labour? We have to deal with the surplus labour on the lines of the Right to Work Bill. We tried to get it through. You held meetings about it, passed resolutions in Labour Party branches and Trade Unions, but you had not the enthusiasm and conviction outside to compel the House of Commons to pass it. Now, sheer necessity comes in, and whatever Government is in power is bound to do something to deal with the unemployed man. (Loud applause.)

ORGANISED TRADES.

Then we must deal with the grievances of the organised trades. Wages boards will not give a maximum wage in them;

they will only give a minimum wage. I want organised trades to get a maximum wage. Let your Trade Unions agree with the best employers as they do now, but the moment agreement has been come to with representative workmen and representative employers, that agreement should be registered by, say, the Board of Trade, and when that is done that agreement can be imposed on all employers in the particular trade and district. Your good employer will not then be afraid to give good wages, as he says he is now, because he will be cut out by other employers. Organisations of men and organisations of employers will then come to agreements, and no parasites on either side, or of any kind, can make those agreements null and void by degrading competition. The objection that was taken to this proposal at the Trade Union Congress assumed that if it was carried out it would be impossible to strike in the future. Nothing of the kind. I am not one of those who will agree to forfeit the right of the workmen to strike when necessity compels him. (Applause.) Our State may be very benevolent; you may get officers, impartial officers appointed by the Board of Trade, but you may not. You may get Chairmen of Arbitration Courts who sit up in the clouds like angels and look impartially down on the interests of both sides, but you may not. (Laughter and "Hear, hear.") In any event our present State is influenced by its prejudices, its customs, and its modes of thought in favour of the capitalist system, and so long as that is the case workmen must retain the right to strike. But whilst I say that, there is one kind of strike utterly valueless, and I would beg my friends of the Trade Union movement not to place any reliance upon it at all.

THE SYMPATHETIC STRIKE.

I mean the sympathetic strike. (Applause.) The sympathetic strike simply widens the area of the strike. It simply means that instead of putting a well ascertained burden on the funds of the trade union concerned, an unascertained burden is imposed upon them. Instead of taking from them a certain weekly sum which they can recover by levies upon other unions if necessary, the sympathetic strike dries up these streams at their very source and the reservoir of cash can never be filled up. Another point is this. The sympathetic strike threatens society itself. You begin a strike against a company or in a trade and you fight it out. That is Labour versus Capital. But you call a sympathetic strike and stop the supplies that society wants. That moment society begins to protect itself against the strikers. That is not Labour versus Capital; it is Labour versus Society, and the moment it becomes that, Labour has very little chance of winning its battle. A sympathetic strike as a Labour protective device does little but pander to the dramatic imagination of that section

that calls itself the extreme section. As a matter of fact it is "extreme" only on the side of Capital. It plays the Capitalists' game. The sympathetic strike only increases the problems of Labour, makes the Trade Union battle more difficult than it is, and almost foredooms the poor men who have come out to certain defeat. I shall never be a party to devising Labour legislation with the idea of making it of such a character as to render the sympathetic strike easy. (Loud applause.)

A LAND POLICY.

Now we must supplement that programme with a great land policy. I am not going into its details to-night. I have not time. But this seems to me to be its outlines. We must have a minimum wage for agricultural labourers. We must have an improved housing policy. We must have an adaptation of the Irish Agricultural Labourers Acts to England. We must have co-operative organisation supported by the State, for that is the best way to do it. Under modern conditions no small cultivator can succeed on individualistic lines. You have to organise them for the exchange of their produce, for housing, for machinery, for labour, and for marketing, and nothing can do that better than a well-equipped, well-advised department of the State.

Finally, we must have land for use and not for luxury. (Applause.) The other day I was coming down from Scotland to England and I saw a great crowd of sorrowful, weeping and sobbing people at a station where I had to change. I asked the reason why and was told that a special train was taking 600 agricultural labourers to Liverpool on their way to Canada. (Shame.) The men were the strong, healthy beings we need to carry on the life of our country. But they (and the generations that will follow), where will they be found? Four or five days by sea, four or five days by land, you must go before you can discover them in Canada. They ought to be here at home. (Applause.) There is room for them at home. There is more fertility in this country than there is there. Clothe your children, build healthy homes for your people, and there will be more rich harvests in this land than there will be won by sending agriculturists from Scotland to Canada as is being done at the present time. That is the supplement to the Labour Party policy affecting town workers. (Applause.)

NATIONALISATION.

Then behind it all we must have the policy of nationalisation —(applause)—the nationalisation of railways—(applause)—the nationalisation of mines. (Applause.) You can raise wages without benefiting the public. You are just like a people living

on top of a morass with the waters sapping the foundations of your house. By some process you raise the foundations a few feet, and discover that by what you have done you have raised the level of the marsh. The economic monopolist is always coming on. He can always increase his price. You compel the railways to pay better wages, and at once up go the fares and the freights. They go up farther than the cost of labour has gone up. You introduce an eight-hours' day for miners, a Mines Regulation Bill, and a Miners' Minimum Wage Bill, and, in consequence, you add about 4d. or 5d. to the cost of getting coal out of the ground. But the man who owns the coal and who distributes it puts up the cost by adding 2/-. So what is going to happen? You will never get out of your difficulties until you have a body of representatives in the House of Commons pledged to nationalisation, and which will carry it out as the Labour Party wants to do when you give it the power. Well, my friends, this is an outline, this is a sketch of the policy of the Labour Party. And I want, in conclusion, just to say one thing to you.

PARLIAMENT AND THE PEOPLE.

Parliament cannot do these things on its own initiative. The initiative which alone Parliament can act upon is the initiative of public opinion outside. Parliament may be perfect in its parts, as Parliament to-day is certainly not, but however perfect in its parts it may be, it is like an engine without fire. Because Parliament has not the necessary force it cannot act upon its own initiative. Those forces must always come from outside, from the constituency, the workshop, the home. Public opinion alone must decide what power shall be put into Parliamentary action. Parliament cannot make issues. Public opinion alone can make issues. A Speaker, very well known in the annals of our Parliament, and at a very fine time of those annals too, once said when the King asked him to do something: "I have no eyes, I have no ears, I have no voice but what Parliament gives me." I can come to you to-night and say, "Parliament has no eyes, no ears, no voice, except those that the people outside give it." Parliament works *with* the people, not *for* the people; Parliament co-operates with the people, and does not act in spite of the people. That is particularly true with regard to Trade Unions. The Labour Party in the House cannot do the work of the Trade Union movement inside unless the Trade Union movement outside is alive and active and doing its own share. (Hear, hear.) There are two great armies marching on parallel lines, the political army here, the Trade Union army there, each supporting the other in their mutual battles. The Labour Party within Parliament and the Trade Union Party in the workshops—these two armies are essential if the well-being of the people is to be safeguarded and

advanced under the conditions of modern days. (Hear, hear.) And when that is done, when you are alive outside, when Parliament is given a voice by you becoming active and vociferous, then, and then only, will the people prosper and the land smile on account of its abundance and on account of its peace. Its riches will then be in the cupboards of its people, not in the pockets of its millionaires. (Loud applause.) Its prosperity will then be round the firesides of its homes, not merely in the drawing-rooms of its rich. Its greatness will be in the people's hearts, not merely written in leading articles in reactionary newspapers. The other day there was a strange scene witnessed at the House of Commons. A party of Welsh working miners came to see us there, and they were invited to sing us some of their songs on the Terrace. It was an unusual experience. We all went out and we listened. There was this body of men singing songs and hymns, uniting our memories of the past with our hopes of the future, and the beautiful voices seemed to hold in them the tunes of the woods from which they came and the solemn hushes of the mountains where their homes were. Oh! my friends, the day will come when that will not be an unusual sound at Westminster—when that will not be an unusual sight. For what is more likely, and what is more proper, and what is more natural than that the people of the land, the toilers of the land, the people who have been emancipated by Parliament, should go on a pilgrimage and offer to Parliament their tribute of thanksgiving and joy in hymns and songs of praise for the legislation which has at last raised up the fallen, has said to the weak "Be strong," has said to the poor "Be mighty," has said to the humble "Be exalted," and has said to the masses "Be free"? That is the work which the Labour Party is going to do. That is its belief. That is its hope. That is its faith. And I appeal to you, my friends, to join our ranks and give us strength to carry out that work to a magnificently successful and speedy conclusion. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

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